



AMADINA CASTANOTIS: *Gould.*

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Chestnut-eared Finch.

Amadina castanotis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part IV. p. 105; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part I.

THIS bird, which is nearly allied to the *Bengali moucheté* of Vieillot's 'Oiseaux Chanteurs,' plate 3, appears to be almost peculiar to the interior of Australia; among other places it inhabits the large plains to the north of the Liverpool range, and is particularly abundant about Brezi and the banks of the river Mokai; but that it sometimes occurs on the southern side of the range, is proved by my having killed five specimens in Mr. Coxen's Garden at Yarrundi on the Upper Hunter. It has also been found, though very sparingly, at Swan River, and a specimen is contained in the collection formed by Mr. Bynoe at Port Essington: like the *Amadina Lathamii*, this species resorts much to the ground and feeds upon the seeds of various kinds of grasses. On the plains it congregates in small flocks, and evinces a decided preference to those spots where the trees are thinly dispersed and grasses abundant.

The Chestnut-eared Finch is one of the smallest of the genus yet discovered in Australia; it is also one of the most beautiful, and in the chasteness of its colouring can scarcely be excelled.

The two sexes differ very considerably in their markings, and may be thus described:—

The male has the crown of the head, nape and back brownish grey; wings brown; rump white; upper tail-coverts jet black, each feather having three large and conspicuous oval spots of white; tail-feathers blackish brown slightly tinged with white at their tips; cheeks and ear-coverts reddish chestnut, separated from the bill by a narrow transverse line of white, which white line is bounded on each side by a still finer line of black; throat and chest grey, the feathers transversely marked with fine lines of black; a small black patch on the middle of the chest; abdomen white; under tail-coverts buffy white; flanks chestnut, each feather marked near the tip with two small oval spots of white; bill reddish orange; feet reddish orange, rather lighter than the bill; irides red.

The female has the transverse lines on the face, upper tail-coverts and feet, as in the male; upper surface, ear-coverts, wings, tail and flanks greyish brown; throat and chest grey, slightly tinged with brown; abdomen yellowish brown; bill reddish orange.

The figures represent both sexes of the natural size.